

Message Text

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ORIGIN COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 SS-20 DODE-00 TRSE-00 PM-07

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

CHMAAG BENELUX

CHMAAG NETHERLANDS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 240254

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BMEP, BE

SUBJ: MAJOR PROJECT - REPLACEMENT FOR F-104

REF: (A) STATE 226125? (B) MAAG BRUSSELS 211540Z, NOV 73;
(C) STATE 231268

1. EMBASSY AND MAAG ARE REQUESTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT STRONGLY U.S. ENTRIES IN
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COMPETION FOR F-104 REPLACEMENT.

2. REFTEL (A) INQUIRED AS TO FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INDICATED URGENCY FOR GOB DECISION IN SELECTION OF REPLACEMENT AIRPLANE. REFTEL (B) SETS FORTH IMPORTANT FACTORS AND SPECIFICALLY POINTS OUT GREAT EFFORT BY FRENCH FIRM DASSAULT AND THEIR DESIRE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FACT F-1 MIRAGE EXPORT MODEL IS ALMOST READY FOR PRODUCTION WHILE U.S. FIRMS DO NOT HAVE THEIR CONTENDERS FLYING.

3. REFTEL (C) DISCUSSES BURDENSARING PROBLEM AND PROPOSES INCREASED PROCUREMENT COMMITMENTS BY NATO MEMBERS. U.S. MILITARY BOP DEFICIT WOULD BE EVENTUALLY BE EASED SUBSTANTIALLY BY PROCUREMENT OF F-104 REPLACEMENT FROM U.S. FIRM. OBTAINING THIS CONTRACT BY A U.S. FIRM CAN, IN THE LONG TERM, MEAN A BILLION DOLLARS OF EXPORTS FOR THE U.S.

4. VIGOROUS SUPPORT IS NECESSARY TO COUNTER FRENCH PUSH FOR EARLY DECISION AND THE ECONOMIC PRESSURES FRENCH ARE CONTINUING TO USE. AS POINTED OUT IN REFTEL (B) THERE IS NO LOCKHEED TEST VEHICLE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. WHILE GENERAL DYNAMICS WILL BE TEST FLYING THEIR LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER SOON, NO PROPOSALS OF TYPE NECESSARY TO MEET WORK REQUIRED IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN PRESENTED AS YET. NORTHROP WILL HAVE A TEST VEHICLE FLYING EARLY SPRING AND HAS PRESENTED A PROPOSAL TO GOB AND GON (A NECESSARY REQUIREMENT FOR CONSIDERATION IN SUCH A COPRODUCTION PACKAGE).

5. RECOMMEND EMBASSY ENCOURAGE CLOSE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN GON AND GOB FOR F-104 REPLACEMENT. PLEASE REPORT ON ANY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN BELGIUM AND NETHERLANDS ON THIS SUBJECT AS INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE. KISSINGER

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